

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life

Held on March 20, 2009

SGW Campus H-440, 10 am

PRESENT: Ms. Elizabeth Morey (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Ms. Anna Barrafato, Dr. Donald Boisvert, Dr. Catherine Bolton, Mr. Elie Chivi, Mr. Roger Côté, Ms. Catherine Dicaire, Ms. Melanie Drew, Ms. Angela Ghabban, Mr. Colin Goldfinch, Ms. Priscila Gomes, Ms. Marlene Gross, Mr. Rodney Roberts (on behalf of Ms. Katherine Hedrich), Mr. Jean-Philippe Savard, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Ms. Rose Wangechi.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Mr. Gerald Beasley, Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Ms. Daniela Caputo, Ms. Johanne De Cubellis, Ms. Lina Lipscombe, Mr. Devin Wells.

ABSENT: Mr. Jean Brisebois, Ms. Cathy Lin, Mr. Kurt Reckziegel, Mr. Mansimarjot Singh Samra.

GUEST: Ms. Jane Hackett.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Ms. Stanbra moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Goldfinch seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair thanked the Council for making themselves available for the special CCSL meeting that had been called. She reminded them of the CSU elections that would take place from March 24th to 26th and asked everyone to encourage the students to vote. The Chair notified CCSL that the Concordia University Student Parent Network (CUSP) would be having the official opening of their office and lounge area in the K-annex later that afternoon and welcomed everyone to attend. She also noted that the CCSL Awards night would be held on April 2nd at 5pm in the Faculty Club, and that the invitations would be sent out that day. The Chair added that the CCSL Awards Committee received very few nominations and that they would be reviewing the submission guidelines and the entire format of the awards at a later meeting. This year, the CCSL Awards night would include a volunteer recognition to celebrate those in the Concordia community who volunteer. The Chair said that the volunteer recognition had received more nominations than the CCSL awards themselves.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF MARCH 6TH, 2009

Dr. Boisvert moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Côté seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. STUDENT SERVICES/RECREATION & ATHLETICS BUDGETS

Mr. Côté informed the Council that he had been notified by the secretary of the Board of Governors that the Executive Committee would be meeting on April 2nd and would be asked to hear the issue of the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics budgets. Mr. Côté noted that the aim was to have the budgets on the agenda for the April 16th, 2009 Board of Governors meeting. This special CCSL meeting had been called with the goal of approving the proposed budgets after reviewing the adjustments that would have to be made to arrive at a zero increase to the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics fees. Following the CCSL meeting held on March 6th, 2009, the objective was set to adjust the Student Services budget to reflect the resolution that had been adopted at that meeting to keep the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics fee at the current level over the next three year budget period (2009-2012). Mr. Côté distributed the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics budgets. He noted that the Recreation & Athletics budget, dated January 30th, 2009, remained unchanged with a zero increase in the fee. The Student Services budget, dated March 20th, 2009, included the most recent set of adjustments.

Mr. Côté explained that the Student Services budget dated March 20th, 2009 would see a reduction of approximately \$363,000 over the 2009-2012 period, on top of the reductions and adjustments made since January 2009. He recalled that in the previous budget, a surplus had been budgeted in year 1 (2009-2010) to offset a deficit forecasted for year 3 (2011-2012). This was still the case in the present budget. Mr. Côté pointed out that \$87,105 had been budgeted as an expense in year 1, and \$77,584 had been budgeted as an expense in year 2 (2010-2011). Both surpluses would be applied to the revenues of the following year, resulting in a balanced budget for year 3 of the budget period.

Mr. Côté continued by presenting a table detailing the \$362,906 required reductions that were embedded in the proposed budget for review. He said that the objective was to focus reductions on areas that would have the least impact on services to students. Mr. Côté noted that the following areas would be reduced: a sector-wide reduction of 50% in conference expenses; a sector-wide reduction in training expenses; removal of the purchase of the co-curricular software, a one time expense in year 1 of the proposed budget; removal of two surveys planned to examine student engagement and student health; reductions in internal advertising; removal of evening hours at the Dean of Students Loyola office, which would include the elimination of some student employment; removal of expenses from the Dean of Students budget for security, previously used to support student initiatives requiring the service; reduction in expenditure on books throughout the sector; reduction in Counseling & Development psychometric testing that would require a licensing fee to be paid for each test administered; and the removal of the Legal Information Services (LIS) offered by Advocacy and Support Services, over the three-year period 2009-2012. Mr. Côté informed the Council that the removal of the LIS would allow the continuation of the Student Advocate Program (SAP), a service with relatively more value to the students, although both were important. The Directors recognized alternatives to the LIS internally within the University as well as external community based organizations, and its removal would assist in achieving the cost reduction objective. Mr. Côté welcomed any questions or discussion of the reductions presented.

Dr. Boisvert expressed his concern over the removal of the co-curricular software from the budget. He informed the Council that this expense had been a priority discussed at the open forum on the President Panel on the Student Experience. Dr. Boisvert asked if there would be other options available to put the co-curricular software in place. The Chair responded that hopefully alternative sources of funding would be found. The University has expressed its support for such programs, therefore would hopefully be able to assist in the funding. Donor assistance would also be explored. Dr. Boisvert added that removing psychometric testing would also appear to be going against the objectives of the University. Mr. Côté responded that the reductions in these areas do not take away from their importance. He emphasized that these initiatives are not exclusive to the Student Services sector, and that efforts will be made to develop partnerships with other sectors within the University to see that they are still realized. The issue at hand is the reality of the financial context and compromises will be made to resolve these issues. Ms. Sheahan pointed out that the goal of the budget reductions was to become less dependent on tools that will force the sector to pay user fees. She wished to highlight that the aim was to find alternative methods of providing these important services. Dr. Bolton wanted to put on record her concern over the reductions in these areas and that she hoped that alternative methods would be sought to help support students.

Mr. Chivi asked what the costs of rebranding would be to remove the LIS from signage and informational material throughout the University. Ms. St-Laurent responded that these costs would not be significant and would be absorbed by Advocacy & Support Services.

Mr. Côté distributed the draft resolution on the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics Budgets dated March 20th, 2009:

Whereas the Council is the highest non-academic advisory committee in the University making recommendations regarding the quality of student life;

Whereas the mandate of CCSL, among others, is to develop and evaluate the Student Services and Recreation and Athletics budgets as well as the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics fees and recommend these to the Board of Governors for approval;

Be it resolved that CCSL adopt the three year Student Services and Recreation & Athletics Budgets for fiscal years 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2011/2012 as per attached documents (Student Services Budget of March 20th 2009 and R&A Budget dated January 30th 2009).

Mr. Côté moved to approve the resolution and Dr. Boisvert seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Côté expressed his appreciation to everyone for their efforts in finalizing the 2009-2012 Student Services and Recreation & Athletics budgets.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 3rd, 2009, 10am, Loyola AD-308.

7. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Ms. Gross requested to make an announcement that Bridge Magazine would be launching their first online issue, which would be a “best of” edition. A link had been created and was advertised on Shoptalk, as well as on the Concordia website’s homepage. She encouraged the members of CCSL to view the online publication.

Ms. Sheahan motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Stanbra seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.